

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7799
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
CINCPAC

C O N F I E N T I A L PEKING 0975

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINR, CH

SUBJ: SOVIET EMBOFF'S COMMENTS ON PROVINCIAL RESHUFFLE

REF: HONG KONG 2568

1. SOVIET EMBOFF, IN CONVERSATION WITH USLO OFFICER, SAID HE AND HIS COLEAGUES WERE IMPRESSED BY WHAT APPEARED TO BE CONTEST BETWEEN HUA KUO-FENG AND CANTON MR COMMANDER HSU CHIH-YU FOR CONTROL OF PROVINCES OF SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST CHINA. IN PARTICULAR, HE SEES KWEICHOW AS A PROVINCE WHERE HUA HAS SUCCEEDED IN IMPLANTING HIS OWN PEOPLE AS A COUNTER TO HSU'S INFLUENCE IN YUNNAN, SZECHUAN AND KWANGSI. ACCORDING TO EMBOFF, NEW KWEICHOW FIRST SECRETARY MA LI (REFTEL), WHILE STILL ASSIGNED TO HOPEI, WAS SINGLED OUT FOR PRAISE BY HUA KUO-FENG FOR HIS WORK ON TANGSHAN EARTHQUATE RECONSTRUCTION. HE ALSO NOTED THAT SU KANG, A NEWLY APPOINTED KEWICHOW
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OFFICIAL AND LEADER OF ITS DELEGATION TO THE TACHING CONFERENCE, IS AN OLD HUNAN COLLEAGUE OF HUA'S.

2. IN THIS CONNECTION, SOVIET EMBOFF REFERRED TO MAY 12 PEOPLE'S DAILY LEAD ARTICLE CITING KEWICHOW'S RECENT ECONOMIC GAINS AS AN IMPLICIT

BOOST FOR HUA AND HIS PROTEGES.

3. IN OTHER COMMENTS, EMBOFF SAW LI TEH-SHENG'S ATTENDANCE AT TACHING CONFERENCE AS SIGN OF AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN HIM AND HUA. RATHER THAN RETURN TO THE 1050'S STYLE REGIONAL STRONGHOLDS, SOVIETS CLAIM TO SEE MILITARY REGIONS DIVIDED ON A PEKING/SHENYANG VS. CANTON/NANKING BASIS, WITH OTHER COMMANDERS JOCKEYING FOR POSITION IN BETWEEN.

4. COMMENT: SOVIETS, OF COURSE, HAVE SHOWN CONSISTENT PENCHANT FOR DISCOVERING SPLITS IN CHINESE LEADERSHIP. KWEICHOW ANALYSIS, HOWEVER, IS PLAUSIBLE, GIVEN HUA'S EVIDENT NEED TO PREVENT ANYONE ELSE FROM BUILDING TOO STRONG A REGIONAL POWER BASE. ON THE OTHER HAND, LI-HUA "ALLIANCE" SPECULATION APPEARS TO BE JUST THAT, EXTRA-POLATING FROM USUAL RUMORS ABOUT POLITBURO LINE-UP ON TENG HSIAO-PING REHABILITATION QUESTION.
DEAN

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